Modern Greek Studies Foundation

Μαντατοφόρος*

The Nikos Kazantzakis Chair

Center for Modern Greek Studies
San Francisco State University

Summer 1992 *MANDATOPHOROS: Bearer of news, messenger Vol. 8, No. 2

Harry Mark Petrakis Ends Exciting Semester

*L-R: **John Polyzos, Thanasis Maskaleris, Popi Polyzos,** and **Harry Mark Petrakis** at MGSF Picnic Fundraiser.*

Earlier this summer, Nikos Kazantzakis Chairholder ***Harry Mark Petrakis*** and his wife, ***Diana***, left the Bay Area, their home for four short, but memorable months. Though their stay was brief and filled with event after event (these in addition to his two classes), Mr. and Mrs. Petrakis exemplified grace and warm-heartedness throughout their stay.

New and renewed devotees were on hand from the beginning: from his Kazantzakis class, to his reading and lecture, both at Holy Trinity Church, to the numerous other events around Bay Area and the State. A recap of some of the events follows, but first the Center would like to extend thanks to the attendees and organizers for welcoming Mr. and Mrs. Petrakis...

The Kazantzakis Chair lecture by Mr. Petrakis, held in early May, was a well-attended event which featured insightful observations on the life and works of Nikos Kazantzakis. As with the April 2 reading by Mr. Petrakis, this lecture was

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Kazantzakis Chair 1992 Benefit Gala

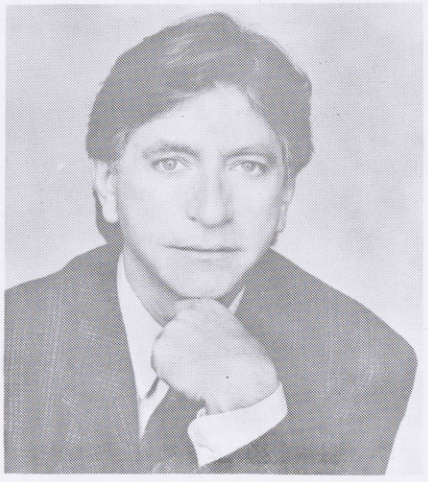
Plan now for the Kazantzakis Chair GALA benefit dinner and dance of the ***Modern Greek Studies Foundation*** on September 26. As with the galas in 1988 and 1991, the event will take place at the Church of the Ascension, Oakland, and as before, the evening will feature food, wine, music and exhibits from a specific region: for 1992, Cyprus will be the focus. His Excellency, Undersecretary to the President of Cyprus, ***Patroklos Stavrou*** has graciously accepted the MGSF's invitation to be guest of honor at the affair.

Sotiris Kitrilakis of Peloponnese Foods, and ***Angel Stoyanof*** of Stoyanof's Restaurant will once again oversee the culinary portion of the event, and based on the successes of the Cretan and Macedonian menus of the last two galas, the upcoming dinner is sure to please even the most discriminating of epicures.

Each benefit has brought the MGSF closer to the $500,000 base necessary to maintain programs and courses offered by the ***Center for Modern Greek Studies at SFSU***. Currently at $400,000, the endowment has paved the way for the appointment of two chairholders, Kimon Friar and Harry Mark Petrakis, and the other academic and cultural programs sponsored by the Center.

As part of the fund raising drive, a raffle will be held, and the prizes — air travel to Greece and Cyprus for two, a week at a resort hotel in Crete, a mainland tour of Greece, etc. — will be awarded at the gala. (Winners need not be present to win, so if the cost for the benefit is out of reach, please consider purchasing the tickets enclosed with this mailing). Regardless, contributors will not be disappointed: the Kazantzakis Chair will give back to the community programs and events that will keep Modern Greek studies alive and well in our area.

Mother's Day with *Deno Gianopoulos*



Devotees of Bay Area pianist ***Deno Gianopoulos*** (pictured at right) were treated to a stirring and deft performance last Mother's Day, when the distinguished musician held a recital at San Francisco's Herbst Theatre. Sponsored by ***The United Hellenic American Societies*** and ***The Modern Greek Studies Foundation***, the program included compositions by Liszt, Ravel, Schubert, and Schumann, as well as selections by Mitropoulos (Piano Piece No. 1) and by Sicilianos (Op. 23, No. 7, from Eight Children's Miniatures).

Reviewer Robert Commonday of the *San Francisco Chronicle* said of Mr. Gianopoulos, "(He) plays into the keyboard and into the music, deep in tone and expression," and added that "it's been too long since...Deno Gianopoulos presented a major recital around here..." With such adulation the stretch between performances (the last was in 1989) may have been long, but his admirers are faithful and know his ability to deliver is often worth the wait.

MGSF Board of Directors News...

The ***Modern Greek Studies Foundation*** is pleased to welcome the following members to its Board of Directors: *Mr. George Benetatos, Mrs. Maria Georgiou, Mr. George Konstantopoulos, Ms. Titika Koplos* , and *Mr. Peter Pappas* .

Congratulations to the following directors for their recent achievements in the community and their professions...to: *Judge Demetrios P. Agretelis*, for his re-election to the Sixth District Superior Court of Alameda County...to *David Hicks, Esq.*, who has been elected president of the Alameda-Contra Costa Trial Lawyers Association...and to *Senator Nicholas C. Petris*, who received the great honor of having the new Caltrans edifice in downtown Oakland named after him. For a man who has devoted his political life to the well-being of his constituency in Oakland and to the people of California, such recognition pays homage to his tireless dedication.

The dedication plaque to Sen. Petris, as it appears in the entry hall of the new Caltrans Building.

Special Donations to the MGSF

John & Popi Polyzos
Order of Ahepa (George Polos Chapter, #505)
Peloponnese Foods
Stoyanof's Restaurant

Individual Contributors to the MGSF

Judge Demetrios P. Agretelis * Patricia Aleck
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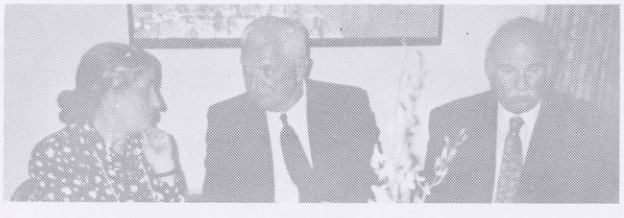
William & Christina Wardell * Anastasia Yermanos

Petrakis Ends Semester
(continued from page 1)

presented in cooperation with Holy Trinity Church, and the Center is most grateful for the generosity of ***Father Anthony Kostouros*** and his parish.

In late May, at the St. Helena home of ***John and Popi Polyzos***, Mr. and Mrs. Petrakis were special guests of honor at the Modern Greek Studies Foundation's fund raiser for the Kazantzakis Chair. Originally proposed by Mr. Polyzos three years ago, the timeliness of the event during Mr. Petrakis' brief tenure could not have been better planned. Some one-hundred guests were on hand for a traditional *glendi* which included enough dancing and swimming to burn off all the delicious calories consumed.

Early in June, the Modern Greek Studies Foundation held a farewell dinner for Mr. and Mrs. Petrakis at the elegant Metropolitan Club of San Francisco, through the courtesy of ***Mrs. Soula Leones***. Attended by the MGSF board of directors and special guests, the gathering was dignified (also on hand was the honorable George Christopher), enterprising (as future programs and events were brainstormed), and of course, festive...Leave it to Harry Mark Petrakis to change an event of goodbye to one of joyous storytelling!



L-R: ***Diana Petrakis****, the Honorable* ***George Christopher****, and* ***Harry Mark Petrakis****, at the Metropolitan Club farewell dinner.*

The multiplicity of events could fill-up a newsletter on their own: from SFSU ***President Corrigan***'s farewell party at the University Club, to the events in Modesto, in San Diego, in San Jose...all of which show how far-reaching the "world of Petrakis" extends, and how we will miss him. The Kazantzakis Chair, the University and the community were truly privileged to have him!

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Reflections from: *Harry Mark Petrakis*

The following is an excerpt from "Letter from San Francisco," by Harry Mark Petrakis:

> *... On the first day of the Nikos Kazantzakis class...despite all my years of lecturing, I experienced pronounced nervousness when I observed all those earnest faces waiting for me to utter some matchless Cretan wisdom. Resolved to prove my mettle I did not so much begin to teach as assault them with words pouring forth in a waterfall of volubility. By the time of our mid-class break, I was exhausted and realized that if I kept up that passionate pace, in a few weeks I would be a burned-out husk of a teacher with a burned-out husk of a class. So I drew on the wellsprings of the ancient sages...and slowed down and grew calmer and stopped trying to explain Kazantzakis and began with my class a journey to discover him anew. Each week since then...we talk about Kazantzakis, but also about life and death and love,...the wounds of common experience and the assaults that human flesh is heir to, and we exchange anecdotes and stories....*

(Note: the Center and SFSU have recently appointed Mr. Petrakis *Honorary Professor to the Nikos Kazantzakis Chair, for life.*)

Center Course Offerings
Fall 1992

Beginning Modern Greek
Day: T Th * HSS 341 * 3:30-5 PM
Evening: T * HSS 346 * 7-9:45 PM
Instructor: Effie Kalafatis

Modern Greek Poetry
MWF * HSS 341 * 1:10-2 PM
Instructor: Thanasis Maskaleris

The Odysseys of Homer and of Kazantzakis
W * HSS 341 * 3:10-5:55 PM
Instructor: Thanasis Maskaleris

Classes begin Thursday, August 27. Members of the community are welcome to attend and participate in all of the above courses through Extended Education. For details, please call the Center at (415) 338-1892, the Classics Department at (415)338-2068.

Why Support the Nikos Kazantzakis Chair and the Center for Modern Greek Studies at San Francisco State University

In 1983, mainly as the result of a generous gift from Mr. Angelo K. Tsakopoulos, the Nikos Kazantzakis Chair was established at San Francisco State University to complement the work of the Center for Modern Greek Studies, and to reinforce the underlying academic and scholarly purposes of the program. The Modern Greek Studies Foundation has dedicated itself to the task of fund raising, to augment the Chair endowment. As one of only three endowed Modern Greek university chairs in United States, the Kazantzakis Chair provides the opportunity for well-known scholars from throughout the world to come to the University, and to share their knowledge about the worth of Modern Greek civilization, the classical basis of Neo-Hellenic culture and the value of the Greek American experience. Two such individuals, the authors, Kimon Friar and Harry Mark Petrakis, have each spent a semester at San Francisco State University as Visiting Professors to the Kazantzakis Chair. The Center has also drawn on the talents of local scholars to offer courses, i.e., the Very Reverend Dr. Leonidas Contos on the Orthodox tradition and Dr. Epaminondas Panagopoulos on Modern Greek history. The Center is planning to invite other prominent specialists to teach courses in their fields.

The establishment of a written, visual and oral history archive focusing on the Greek American experience in Northern California has been another goal of the Center. Indicative of this effort have been the popular videotaped "oral history evenings" with such Bay Area Greek Americans as Frank Agnost, Mayor George Christopher and Virginia Lagiss. In years to come, the Center, through a variety of such programs and the semester long seminars, will continue to preserve what is best about our collective past and stimulate interest in the study of Greek letters, civilization and popular culture.

The public information aspect of the Center's programs is also very important. We all realize the value of projecting a positive image of the accomplishments of all parts of the Hellenic World in these difficult times when there still remains, in the Balkans and the Middle East, a fluid international situation characterized by unease and questions of possible territorial expansion on the part of emerging nations. However, before it is possible to engender a sympathetic and favorable national response regarding such concerns, efforts to inform the public and gain their support must first occur at the local level. It is in this respect that the programs of the Center have been especially important in reaching the California non-Greek community and promoting a positive image of Hellenism.

Unfortunately achieving such ends is not without a price. When the Kazantzakis Chair was established, the Foundation pledged to the University that it, with the help of the Bay Area Greek American community, would raise a half million dollar endowment. The income earned from this endowment goes to support the Center and the Chair. This financial commitment was enthusiastically accepted by SFSU, and in turn, the University itself has been most supportive of Center activities by providing office space, equipment and funding which supplements the endowment income. Indicative of this continuing SFSU commitment to the Center is the ongoing allocation of part of the requisite faculty salaries and a suite of offices reserved for Center use in the new Humanities building, now under construction.

It is only through our continued financial support of the programs of the Center and the Kazantzakis Chair that we can ensure that those who follow us can also enjoy and be enriched by the cultural treasures of Hellenism. What has been described above about the Center's work can only suggest the extent of its activities. Working as individuals alone we cannot hope to succeed in passing on this collective knowledge; but by working together, in cooperation with our institutions of higher education in America, we can be assured that this common heritage which we all share is preserved and transmitted to future generations.

—Dr. Peter Haikalis, for the Modern Greek Studies Foundation.
(*Excerpted from a longer article to be published in* **The Hellenic Journal**.)